

Historic, Archive Document

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The Federal Government has just gotten out 2,000,000 farm account books. These books are to be used by the 2,000,000 farmers who have agreed with the Federal Government to limit their production of cotton, wheat, corn, and hogs, or other like basic farm commodities. Each farmer will be furnished a copy of the account book by his local county crop or livestock control association or by his local county agent.

In this book, farmers will record their acreages, yields, and sales of farm crops, their production and sales of livestock and livestock products, the crops and livestock processed and used for food on the farm, and like matters.

In the agricultural adjustment campaigns already ended or now under way, reports indicate that many a farmer has found himself greatly handicapped because he hasn't had competent records; and, in all too many cases, he has had no records at all. Reports also indicate that this lack of records on the part of farmers slowed up the various reduction campaigns and greatly increased their cost. The farmer whose statements of acreages and yields have been backed up with records has had all the advantage over the man whose statements were based on remembrance and guesses. To have the facts always is a big asset in any business.

The beginning of progress in farming is a study of one's business. These account books are to help farmers study their business and know for a certainty where they stand and what they are doing. That is the way progress is made.

In surveys made some years ago by the Federal Department of Agriculture, it was found that about 35 percent of such records as are kept on farms are kept by farm women and young people. My suggestion to farm fathers today is that they enlarge on this number by arranging with their oldest boy or girl to keep these new farm records for them. Many of these older boys and girls are 4-H club members or have been students in Smith-Hughes or agricultural high schools. As such, they already have learned something about keeping farm records.

With practically every project they have undertaken they have had to keep records as a regular part of their work. Therefore, keeping these more comprehensive farm account books now for father in crop and livestock control work would be right in line with their 4-H club and Smith-Hughes training and would at the same time give them a broader understanding and vision of the operations of the whole farm than can be obtained, perhaps, in any other way.

What could be more desirable -- son or daughter keeping such records for father, analyzing them at the end of the year, helping to interpret them, and both getting thereby an idea of the right partnership relation to be formed, should the two ever want to continue farming together. And I suppose that is the hope of almost every farmer as he gets along in years -- that one of his sons, or maybe his daughter, will gradually take over the

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active management of the farm and eventually succeed to the farm. The keeping of these farm record books by one of the family, son or daughter, makes a good start in this direction and forms the basis of an understanding of what is right in the way of mutual sharing in the farm returns.

And, while we are on the subject of farm records, may I bring to you this point. Thousands and thousands of farmers have kept some accounts and have been doing so these hundred years past. That many of them have failed to do has been to summarize these accounts at the end of the year, analyze them and interpret them to see what they mean for further guidance. If accounts are not summarized and analyzed at the end of the year, they might about as well never have been kept.

The Agricultural Extension Service of the Federal Department of Agriculture and the State Agricultural Colleges have been helping farmers the last few years in opening accounts, keeping them, summarizing them, analyzing them, and interpreting them. Through the county agricultural agents and Smith-Hughes teachers and through farm management extension specialists, now located at nearly every agricultural college in the United States, farmers can get skilled help in accounting and in interpreting what the records mean to them each year. If any one of you farmers in the United States who may be listening in today wants help in your farm accounting work, may I suggest that you take it up with your local county agent, or, if you do not have a county agent, write directly to the Extension Service of your State College of Agriculture and get this help.

I hope that all of you 2,000,000 farmers who have joined county crop and livestock control associations keep a record of your farm business the coming year and, to the extent practicable, ask to help you in this work one of your own young people who may be a 4-H club member or a student in some Smith-Hughes or agricultural high school. What finer way to begin a real partnership with son or daughter or to profit by the New Deal?